



Testimony of Ashley Zane  
Government Affairs Associate, CBIA  
Before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
Hartford, CT  
February 7, 2023  
Testifying in Support of:

**HB 5441: AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO WORK IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION OR HEALTH CARE IN THE STATE.**

My name is Ashley Zane and I am a Government Affairs Associate for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's largest business organization, with thousands of member companies, small and large, representing a diverse range of industries from across the state. Ninety-five percent of CBIA member companies have 100 or fewer employees.

I am here in support of HB 5441, *'An Act Concerning College Graduates Who Work in the Fields of Education or Health Care in the State.'* This bill would establish a student loan forgiveness program or public-private partnership to encourage college graduates to pursue careers in teaching or health care in the state for the purpose of addressing labor shortages in such fields.

According to a study conducted by the Connecticut Education Association, seven in ten educators are experiencing high levels of frustration and burnout, 98% of educators identified teacher stress and burnout as their top issues, and 95% of voters pointed to the rising number of teachers leaving the profession.

A February 2022 poll indicated that 23% of healthcare workers intended on leaving the profession. While staffing has been difficult in all professions, some hospitals are experiencing a 30-35% vacancy rate for nurses. As a result of being understaffed, many healthcare providers are forced to implement mandatory overtime-driving up the cost of the healthcare system while also increasing the burnout rate for healthcare employees.

As the state continues to recover and rebuild after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to continue to maintain a competitive and attractive workplace for sectors experiencing some of the highest burnout rates. Student loan repayment benefits help lower the cost for struggling residents and increase opportunity for all communities who are tackling the high costs of living while pursuing pathways to rewarding and much needed careers.

In conclusion, CBIA strongly supports this piece of legislation. Please feel free to reach out to us with any additional questions or concerns you may have.